

**The City of Springfield, Ohio**  
**City Commission Special Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, April 21, 2021 – 5:00 p.m.**  
**City Hall Forum**

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The special meeting was called to order by President Copeland. Roll call was answered by Mrs. Chilton, Dr. Estrop, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Rue, and Mr. Copeland.

The invocation was offered by Mr. Copeland, who then led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**RETREAT**

**115-21** City Manager Heck welcomed commissioners, staff and guests back to the second night of the 2021 City Commission Retreat.

Fire Chief Miller presented information to the Commissioners on strategies to potentially generate income based on services provided at little to no cost currently. Chief Miller described services that could generate user fees including self-inspections for businesses, underground storage tank inspections, plan review, acceptance testing, public education, and false alarm penalties. Some of these services are provided at no cost or minimal cost. Staff proposes consideration of a fee structure where some services which require multiple visits be provided free for the first visit but then charged a fee for follow-up calls. Plan review fees are incorporated with building inspection fees. Chief Miller spoke on false alarm calls where commercial security systems often call for service erroneously. Consideration of fees for excessive repeat offenders was discussed. Mr. Heck noted that false alarm calls from businesses also occur for the Police Division.

Chief Miller also presented EMS Billing Strategies and Concepts information to Commissioners explaining the current "soft" billing process where hospital transports are billed to a patient's insurance with no collection agency referral for unpaid balances for residents, just non-residents. Chief Miller discussed run volumes, fee schedule rates for Advanced Life Support versus Basic Life Support calls, payer mix (Medicare, Medicaid, Insurance and Self Pay), and run volumes involving nursing facilities that are transports rather than emergency calls. Medical necessity was discussed whereby the Fire Rescue Division's transports to the emergency room must be considered an emergency for reimbursement. Discussion of possible revenue collection options were discussed to help collect the fees that go unpaid. Chief Miller also spoke on another concept, ET3, which allow EMS providers to bill for transports other than an emergency room such as 24-hour urgent care facilities which are not currently available in Springfield. Mr. Heck also confirmed that the current procedure is to attempt collection of fees through the patient's insurance, but further collection efforts are only activated for non-Springfield residents. Chief Miller also explained the Fire Rescue Division and the Springfield Regional Hospital have a Health Data Exchange Agreement to share patient insurance data for billing.

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Community Development Director Meadows, Community Development Deputy Director Thompson and Community Development Coordinator Leist made a presentation on Tools to Improve Housing and Neighborhood Quality – Addressing Vacant Properties. Mr. Thompson stated 609 vacant properties have been demolished in the city in the past ten years as a way of managing these properties. Code Enforcement staff uses the new Vacant Property Registry as a tool to identify and manage vacant structures protecting public safety forces from unsafe buildings in an emergency. Mr. Leist stated 845 total vacant properties have been identified as of this date with 343 registered, 57 foreclosed properties registered, and 445 properties unregistered. Expenses in 2020 for nuisance abatement of vacant properties totaled \$764,426.47 including emergency demolitions, junk and trash abatement, and board and secure efforts. Staff also spoke on Compassionate Code Enforcement where staff encourages owners to make necessary repairs and clean-up efforts rather than traditional efforts of issuing orders. Discussion also included delinquent taxes on properties that go unpaid to the local school district and other agencies.

Mrs. Meadows spoke on a proposed Receivership Partnership program that would take a blighted property through the court system and place into receivership for rehabilitation efforts. Receivers are attorneys and realtors who manage the rehabilitation, get the property on the market for sale, and back taxes are recovered. Mr. Leist noted that staff would like to begin this process with unregistered vacant properties that would appropriate for rehabilitation. Staff plans to work with other cities who are currently using this type of program to develop a plan for the Commissioners to consider. Commissioners asked about funding for the program, and Mrs. Meadows stated a receivership program does not require city funding—rehabilitation is completely funded with private dollars primarily by local investors.

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Assistant to the City Manager Cobbs spoke to Commissioners on Ohio's Tobacco 21 law that went into effect on October 17, 2019, changing the minimum age to buy and sell tobacco products to 21 from 18. Enforcement of the law falls under the Sheriff's Department which performs approximately ten compliance checks per year. The Clark County Combined Health District currently conducts compliance checks using funding from a Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Grant. Ms. Cobbs described the Health District's request that the City Commission create a Tobacco Retailer Licensing Policy requiring tobacco retailers to obtain a yearly permit to sell products. Such a program would include a yearly license fee and a violation fine structure. Ms. Cobbs noted the Health District would work with Wittenberg University to send out letters and conduct site visits. It was noted the City Commission would only be asked to create an ordinance allowing for the program to enforce state law, not create a new law.

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Mr. Heck reminded Commissioners that the 2020-2021 Commission Goals and Objectives were discussed in early 2020, but efforts to manage the COVID-19 pandemic prevented formal adoption of the goals. Commissioners

and the City Manager reviewed the existing goals and made recommendations for updates for each section. Mr. Heck will incorporate the proposed changes and distribute them for review prior to formal adoption at a City commission meeting.



There being no further business, on motion of Dr. Estrop, seconded by Mrs. Chilton, the meeting adjourned in executive session on Personnel.

Yeas, Mrs. Chilton, Dr. Estrop, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Rue, and Mr. Copeland.

Yeas 5, Nays 0.

On a motion of Dr. Estrop, seconded by Mr. Rue, the executive session adjourned.

Yeas, Mrs. Chilton, Dr. Estrop, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Rue, and Mr. Copeland.

Yeas 5, Nays 0.

On a motion of Mr. Rue, seconded by Dr. Estrop, the meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Yeas, Mrs. Chilton, Dr. Estrop, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. Rue, and Mr. Copeland.

Yeas 5, Nays 0.

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PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COMMISSION

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CLERK OF THE CITY COMMISSION